

# **Categorical Exclusion - Forestry**

Categorical Exclusion

ID-420-2007-CE-3577

## **Project Name**

South Captain John Salvage/Sanitation Logging

Bureau of Land Management

Coeur d'Alene District

Cottonwood Field Office, Idaho

## **Background**

BLM Office: Cottonwood Field Office

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: ID-420-2007-CE-3577

Proposed Action Title/Type: South Captain John Salvage/Sanitation Logging

Location of Proposed Action: T. 32 N. R. 4 W. Sec. 19, 29, & 32

Description of Proposed Action:

The purpose of this project is to manage/restore vegetation and reduce hazardous fuels, as a result of the Chimney wildfire.

Objectives of the project are:

- Recover economic value of fire created dead/dying trees and insect or disease infected trees.
- Increase the relative proportion of long-lived fire resilient tree species by restoring or regenerating to ponderosa pine and western larch;
- Contribute to the economic and social well being of area users and local residents;
- Implement custodial forest management decisions from the Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan (MFP), primarily to provide for early seral wildlife habitat.

Implement salvage/sanitation logging and reforestation in response to the Chimney Fire.

Measures include logging of approximately 81 acres and reforestation on approximately 38 acres. Stands are comprised of mixed conifers, dominated by grand fir with lesser amounts of Douglas fir, western larch, ponderosa pine, and scattered Engelmann spruce. Burn severity (considering above ground vegetation) is low to mixed on the 65 acres of proposed cable logging within the fire perimeter.

In the burned area, it is proposed to remove all of the merchantable dead timber and most of the remaining live trees, being primarily grand fir that suffered moderate to extreme heat exposure near the base (root collar). Prior to the wildfire disturbance, these stands (all sizes/age classes) were experiencing moderate bark beetle infestation attacks caused by the fir engraver beetle (*scolytus ventrallis*). Infestations are now expected to be heavy due to the increased stress from the wildfire disturbance. Most Douglas fir infected with dwarf mistletoe will also be removed. Areas with high burn mortality and/or expected mortality (as mentioned above) would be replanted with early seral species composed of ponderosa pine and western larch. Large snags or potential snags to be retained for wildlife resource benefits and/or site protection. To provide cover and reduce soil erosion on high mortality cable logged slopes, limbs and tops of harvested

trees would be severed and left in place to the extent practical. Approximately 0.16 mile of temporary road would be constructed to access a proposed cable unit, otherwise logging would occur from existing roads in the remaining harvest units (see attached map).

In the unburned area outside the fire perimeter a sanitation harvest is proposed on approximately 16 acres of tractor ground. This stand area to be managed /maintained as a shaded fuel break that adjoins the recently constructed fuel break on Fish & Game property as a result of the Chimney wildfire. This harvest entry will remove dead and dying trees (mostly grand fir) at risk of increased mortality from an anticipated population increase of the fir engraver beetle, as a direct result of adjacent wildfire stressed trees. Early seral species consisting of ponderosa pine, western larch and Douglas fir will be retained in the overstory to increase the proportion of long-lived fire resilient species. Fuel reduction activities would be accomplished by either hand piling or by masticating (mechanical brushing head) the remaining ground fuels following logging. If hand piled, burning will follow when associated landing piles are burned. Individual silvicultural prescriptions are attached with additional detail for harvest and reforestation.

Access to the project area would be on county and/or Idaho Fish and Game roads. A road use agreement would be obtained from IDFG prior to award of a timber sale contract.

Specific restoration measures identified for the project include the following:

1. Put to bed approximately 0.16 mile of temporary road after timber harvest. This action will include; providing road drainage (e.g., outsloping, cross ditches, rolling dips), scarification/ripping of road surface, grass seeding, mulching and placement of woody debris on the road surface.
2. To provide cover and reduce adverse erosion, timber harvest activities will leave slash material (limbs and tops) on the slopes to the extent that is practical.
3. Recommended seed mixture to be used as follows:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Lbs. per acre</u>
Mountain brome	5
Hard fescue "Durar"	4
Tufted hairgrass	2
Annual rye	3
Western yarrow	2
Golden pea	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	19

4. The recommendations from the Fisheries Biologist in the attached memorandum dated June 30, 2008 are hereby incorporated in this CE as design measures for the project.

## **Land Use Plan Conformance**

Land Use Plan Name: Chief Joseph MFP.

Date Approved/Amended: Chief Joseph MFP approved November 18, 1981.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

Section II D, Management Assumptions, guidelines and Explanations cover the forest management applications for the Cottonwood Field Office. This project will meet the mortality salvage and reforestation guidelines as described in this section.

### **Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 C.(8) as published in the Federal Register August 14, 2007.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed and none of the exceptions described in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2 apply.

I considered other BLM forestry projects in the Chimney Wildfire area. The Categorical Exclusion associated with this wild fire area on Captain John Creek is well removed (approximately 3 air miles) from this project area. Therefore, I consider this to be a separate and independent action.

### **Signature**

Authorizing Official: /s/ Robbin Boyce July 1, 2008  
(Signature) Date

Name: Robbin Boyce for Stephanie Connolly

Title: Field Manager

### **Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Robbin Boyce in writing at the above address or by calling (208) 962-3793.

### **Attachments:**

Extraordinary Circumstances List

Maps

Silvicultural Prescriptions

**Categorical Exclusion**  
**Evaluation and Documentation of Extraordinary Circumstances**  
**South Captain John Salvage/Sanitation Logging**  
**516 DM 11.9 C.(8) as published in the Federal Register August 14, 2007**

Extraordinary circumstances do not exist for the proposed action described within the categorical exclusion. The extraordinary circumstances were evaluated and those findings are documented in the following form.

*Staff review, initial, date and add remarks to appropriate Yes or No column below:*

	<b>The proposed categorical exclusion action will:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
2.1	Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2.2	Have significant impacts on such natural resources and geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
2.3	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E)).		X
2.4	Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5	Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6	Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant environmental effects.		X
2.7	Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
2.8	Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
2.9	Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
2.10	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
2.11	Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
2.12	Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
COTTONWOOD FIELD OFFICE**

**South Captain John Salvage/Sanitation Logging  
Decision Record**

**Proposed Action:** South Captain John Salvage/Sanitation Logging

**CE Number:** ID-420-2007-CE-3577

**Location of Action:** T.32N., R.4W., B.M. Sections 19, 29, & 32

**I. Decision**

I have decided to implement the South Captain John Salvage/Sanitation Logging project as described in the attached CE and stand prescriptions. In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required.

**II. Rationale**

The decision to salvage and reforest this area is in conformance with the Chief Joseph MFP Section II D. This decision meets the objectives of:

- Recovering economic value of fire created dead/dying trees and insect or disease infected trees;
- Increasing the relative proportion of long-lived fire resilient tree species by restoring or regenerating to ponderosa pine and western larch;
- Contributing to the economic and social well being of area users and local residents, and;
- Implementing custodial forest management decisions from the Chief Joseph Management Framework Plan (MFP), primarily to provide for early seral wildlife habitat.

/s/ Robbin Boyce

For: Stephanie Connolly  
Cottonwood Field Manager

July 1, 2008

Date

**III. Administrative Review Procedures**

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with the Forest Management Regulations under 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subpart 5003 – Administrative Remedies, protests may be

filed with the authorized officer, Stephanie Connolly, within 15-days of publication of the notice of decision in a local newspaper. The publication date of the notice of decision in the newspaper of record is the *exclusive* means for calculating the time to file a protest. Protestants should not rely on date or timeframe information provided by any other source.

43 CFR 5003.3 (b) states that: "Protests shall be filed with the Authorized Officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision." This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail or facsimile protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the following address will be accepted:

Stephanie Connolly, Field Manager  
Cottonwood Field Office  
1 Butte Drive  
Cottonwood, Idaho 83522

The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error. Protests received more than 15 days after the publication of the notice of decision are not timely filed and shall not be considered.

Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the project decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of the review, serve the protest decision in writing to the protesting party(ies). Upon denial of a protest, the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision.

If no protest is received by close of business within 15 days after publication of the notice of decision, this decision will become final.

#### **Contact Person**

For further information regarding this project, contact Robbin Boyce in writing at the above address or by calling (208) 962-3793.

Attachment: NEPA compliance document CX